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Memorandum to David A. Crane

SUBJECT: South End Plan

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I divide my criticisms into major and minor points.


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I. I think we have succeeded in the South End plan in establishing a "ghetto" in the area between Massachusetts Avenue and the Inner Belt. We seem to be proposing lower-income and middle-income housing and assuming that the people that live above Massachusetts Avenue are going to come to take those properties when we relocate them. And we seem to be prepared to relocate in mass and start constructing there soon. I think it is a great mistake.

It seems to be that the first two blocks into the South End from the Inner Belt ought to be left open with alternative uses so that when the Inner Belt is constructed, we can then put in there whatever is most appropriate to land values. I sure would not show low and moderate-income housing in the first two blocks. It seems to me that the entire area down around Greenshoe and toward City Hospital and the South Department ought to be maintained as industrial or institutional or in public use, and not in housing. I can't foresee that we are going to get a housing desire on the part of relocatees.

We should then move the elementary school one and one-half blocks closer to Mass. Avenue, and the shopping facilities near it right along with it, so that it can then be tied in closer to the main body of the South End. And we should maintain some kind of diagonals for each system that reaches toward the community junior high school up in the west corner and not block that off from the population. What we have done in this maneuver, in my mind, is to take all the people that represent problems in the South End and shove them down to one piece of land which is relatively vacant. I don't think that the Negro community as a whole is going to accept this; and, as John Stainton suggests, many of the relocatees are going to prefer to move out of the area than to go into such a section. Also we have a big public housing project, and I think that is enough for low-income housing in the area. The rest of it should be moderate-income and some elderly and upper-income possibly along the Inner Belt itself.

II. The next major point in my mind is that you have got to allow some cross traffic from east to west. The proper street is the Dartmouth-Dedham, Alden combination. You can't eliminate the connection between these and you must eliminate the jog. Otherwise the project is completed and the trucks will continue to roll through the streets. Where are they going to turn? It seems to me unreasonable to expect that everybody down in the flower market and industrial area is going all the way out to the service road



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and then travel in a circuitous route around the South End to get back up to Copley Square or to go west. It seems to me that we not only want to bring people into the South End center, but that we want to allow them to get through. I don't see from a circulation's standpoint how we can tolerate the closing off of this street. I do think that we have to recognize that it is a major local street.

- ✓ III. The next major criticism I have is that Albany Street is turned into a very minor local street and that two service roads, one way each, are proposed to carry the traffic along the southeast side of the South End. I think we should probably make Albany Street a one-way and that we ought to have one service road carrying the traffic the other way--but I can't see building two. I don't think the gain from that kind of expenditure is great enough and I suspect the City of Boston is going to have to pay for it. I don't think the traffic problems along Albany are so severe that the users proposed there are going to have problems living with it. Albany is a one-way major local street.
- IV. The fourth criticism is that there is no social plan, but I don't think that this is our South End project team's fault. I think this is ABCD's responsibility; and they should be pushed on it and give us a program for the alcoholics and the other human problems that we have in the South End. That program should be in before we start talking to the community.
- ✓ V. Drawing the area south of Mass. Avenue closer into the South End as a whole has not been adequately accomplished by this plan. We need to have some visible means of tying together those housing units that will be across Mass. Avenue back into the heart of the South End. We don't have that now. We probably need to look at the distribution of the community facilities along the two blocks between Washington and Shawmut a little better than we have, but I don't feel as Crane does that the distribution of community facilities from a service standpoint is really so troublesome. From the service standpoint it looks to me as if the schools are fairly well placed. The library is in an active location; a swimming pool in the Center is o.k. provided it is not a MDC facility, but a boys club project. Skating rinks at either end of the project, and Mackey and the other junior high are useful placements.
- ✓ VI. We don't seem to show in the illustrated site plan a sufficient recognition of the importance of small kinds of recreation, casual spaces, small lots, and extending seam of open space to this area as a residential community. I wonder if we haven't lost many of John Stainton's very good ideas on recreation for the South End.

There are a few minor points which I can argue with, too.

- ✓ 1. I don't think the gateway at Dartmouth Street should be plan for moderate-income as close as it is to Prudential. It should be high-rise, high-income families, or upper middle at least.
- ✓ 2. In the plan for the medical school, we probably should plan the South Department on an interim basis as bare for parking--note the need for parking and suggest that eventually across Albany Street we will have space for a parking garage, but we ought not to make the garage a firm proposal of the plan until it's demonstrated that we got a use for the South Department land. We ought to allow a full acre for the temporary home on South Department.
- ✓ 3. I still believe that a major shopping center ought to be constructed somewhere to serve the South End people. Maybe that can be done across the Inner Belt, but if not there, then it ought to be done in the first two blocks into the South End along the Inner Belt. I don't think a low-cost supermarket service facility is necessarily going to run all the small businessmen out of business in the South End; and, anyway, a number of those businessmen are going to be out as soon as they have to move (our figures from Castle Square indicate this). One of the problems we've got with the project is that we are going to pub a number of small shopkeepers out of business by having to take their property.
- ✓ 4. I think it is too bad if we are going to build expensive viaducts for a turnpike service road because we have got two firms who, like Modern Blueprint, have just moved into the South End and have spent money on factories. I wonder if there is some alternative to a viaduct which allows Modern Blueprint and Morgan Memorial to have their plants.

+ You would expect that I could comment upon the relationship of \$40 plus millions of dollars to the project as a whole. Is the cost worth the benefits? This is not easy for me to do. We are only spending \$4½ million on roads of that total cost--and in the Charlestown area we spent more than that, and in Washington Park we are spending more than that--and most of that cost on roads is going for the service highways. Ringing the project, I suspect that we are spending much too little for street improvements in the South End. I think the better question is what we are getting for our \$40 million. A great deal of land acquisition. And we are getting new schools and major new community facilities, but are we getting the little things in the blocks--the small backyard areas for play space, the fire hydrants that can be opened and the streets flooded for a little recreation. Charlestown seemed to have a lot of that sort of thing,

and I think a residential community like South End would have that sort of thing too.

I am impressed by John's thought that we ought to move very slowly in the South End in the beginning. We ought to concentrate in the early years of the project in taking all the tax-title land, all of it, and putting that to good use in building the new community facilities in the strategic locations and in providing the industrial developments sites and the flower market. We ought to do what we can for rehabilitation in the main part of the South End for low- and middle-income families--that's important. And we need to build some elderly housing. But we should move slowly across Mass. Avenue. Mainly across Mass. Avenue itself we shouldn't be in a hurry about taking properties that are privately owned for housing sites. We should do what we can along Washington and Tremont to make them more interesting streets. Staging ought to be planned over ten years for the South End. A lot is going to happen on its own down there.

I am sorry that this memo isn't more cogent nor more scholarly, but I do feel that on major points cooperation is pretty limited. On minor points I think we can cooperate to make changes.

